2020 LED Webinar Series: Providing Perspective During COVID - 19 Using Census Data
August 19, 2020

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time all participants are in a listen-only mode. During the question and answer session. You may press Star 1 on your phone if you'd like to ask a question. Today's conference is being recorded. If you have any objections you may disconnect at this time. Now I like to turn the meeting over to this. Miss Earlene Dowell. Thank you. You may begin.

Earlene Dowell: Thank you Shannon. Good afternoon everyone. In light of the recent transition to 100% telework, we are utilizing technology offsite to continue operations. We aim to minimize interruptions as much as possible. But we appreciate your patience if we experience any technical delays. Please utilize the chat features to notify us of issues should any arise. And we will do our best to address them.

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On behalf of the U.S. Census Bureau and the Local Employment Dynamics Partnership in collaboration with the Council for Community and Economic Research and the Labor Market Information Institute welcome to the August LED Webinar Providing Perspective During COVID-19 Using Census Data with our presenter, Cameron Macht.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented changes across all industries but has also hit some sectors harder than others. In addition to new data coming out data can provide useful perspective on who has been and will be more impacted by the economic changes.

Minnesota's Labor Market Information Institute has used the U.S. Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics or LEHD data to supplement information provided in a set of regional industry profiles racial disparities reports and other context setting pieces and are helping economic and workforce development partners prepare for and respond to the recovery.

This presentation will also illustrate how LEHD data was used to create a Tableau visualization that displays race and ethnicity data in a useful manner. Cameron Macht is a Regional Analysis and Outreach Manager and is currently the acting assistant LMI Director at the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development or DEED for short. He supervises a team of five regional analysts that provide labor market information to support workforce and economic development efforts across the state as well as seven other analysts at DEED headquarters providing tools and research.

He has over 15 years of experience working in DEED's LMI office and has a prior career practice in marketing market research and economic development. He has a bachelor's degree in organizational management and marketing from the University of Minnesota Duluth. With that I welcome back a previously LED Webinar presenter and workshop presenter Cameron Macht.

Cameron Macht: Thank you Earlene. Good afternoon everyone. I hope that you're all doing well. I just want to say thank you quick for the opportunity to present and to join with colleagues from across the country. I'm very happy to be here and

really enjoy working with Earlene and the Census so thank you Earlene for the invitation.

The Census Bureau is such a valuable partner for our state labor market information office and the data produced in partnership is extremely useful. It's awesome that there is so much data available to help people try and make sense of these difficult times when uncertainty seems to be the new normal.

So as noted my name is Cameron Macht. I'm the Regional Analysis and Outreach Manager for the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and I'm also currently serving as the acting assistant LMI Director alongside our LMI Director, Oriane Casale. Oriane and our Commissioner Steve Grove have done a wonderful job of leading us through these challenging times.

Now I'm biased of course, but I would say that the need for a clear understanding of economic data is always important but right now it kind of feels different. These really are unprecedented times. Every source of data can be put together like a puzzle helping to provide a clearer picture of the state of the economy. We need to analyze and understand the data in order to help not only react to changing conditions but also to prepare for what comes next.

These have been a difficult set of months in Minnesota in many ways but Minnesota is strong and we will get through this and we will be better because of all the different ways that DEED works in our state's economy. We know that we are going to play a critical role in the months and perhaps years of rebuilding that lie ahead. It's going to take all of us working together and it's going to stretch us to do more and to do better than we've ever had to before. So we were invited to talk about our data in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic because of the work we've been doing to provide economic

information to our state.

Like many of you we've been extremely busy over the past five months due to the pandemic. The department that I work for also oversees the unemployment insurance program, does business and community development and financing, workforce development and many more things. Our LMI office is just one small part of our agency but we've probably never been so popular.

If you're like me as an LMI person we're usually the people at the conference that other people try to avoid talking to you so they don't get dragged into some long boring conversation about how labor force participation rates are calculated or something along those lines.

But now it's been nice because it seems like everyone wants to know the nuance of the unemployment rate and how we calculate these different things. It's kind of been a media sensation for us so it's been great to have people paying more attention but it has also been challenging to answer all the questions that come in especially those that simply aren't answerable through data yet.

Like all state LMI offices we work in partnership with the Bureau of Labor Statistics to produce a set of useful employment and economic development or economic data. At our best LMI is the foundation for smart informed market responsive decision making in economic and workforce development. But the fact is almost all of our data is backward facing. We publish our information with a time lag after receiving it from the people and businesses of our state.

Now this works great in normal times. We're able to help identify trends target industries and occupations and make projections for the future. We have

strong partnerships with both economic and workforce development agencies across the state and we help provide the information they need to make smart decisions. But the call for real-time data is increasing. In an economic environment where things can change week to week or even day to day people want as much current data as possible.

While that's great and we've certainly been trying to move in that direction it doesn't mean that all of the existing data that we already produce isn't useful anymore. Instead like mentioned earlier it can be used to provide more pieces of the puzzle. We just have to know how to fit them together.

So probably our most well-known dataset is the monthly unemployment rate. When released this often makes the A section of the newspaper and people follow it with great interest. In Minnesota we had spent several years talking about the tight labor market we were experiencing in our state and even the challenge of continuing to add jobs at the same pace in the face of slowing labor force growth in the future.

Then in March everything changed. The COVID-19 pandemic had taken hold and by April the US unemployment rate spiked to 14.7% and Minnesota's rate jumped to 8.7% so that was actually still among the lowest rates in the US overall. When the US rate fell back a little to 13.3% in May of 2020, we climbed to 9.9%. Now that surge in unemployment was completely unprecedented in our state's history. We have soared from about 90,000 unemployed workers in March to about 300,000 unemployed workers by May.

In June our rate was back down to 8.6% and we had about 267,000 unemployed workers. Unfortunately, some of the limitations with the data collection were put on display as these numbers were released, the very

specific definitions of employment and unemployment that are used in the local area unemployment statistics program with small sample sizes for the surveys and the timeframe that the data actually represents to name just a few.

So while this is useful as an economic gauge unemployment data comes out three weeks into each month, for the previous month and during this pandemic, we were seeing things changing significantly every day which increased the calls for more real-time data. More recently the US unemployment rate dropped to 10.2% in July and our July rate will actually be released tomorrow.

One thing that is important to note though is we are starting to see a trend though it's still pretty slight of people starting to drop out of the labor force. And that can be due to being discouraged, not being able to find work, potentially staying home to care for children or to care for sick relatives or maybe just deciding to retire out of the labor force for good. So we know we need to keep monitoring that trend in the next couple of months.

Like unemployment rate, our current employment statistics data also comes out three weeks into each month. And last month showed an over the year loss of about 275,000 jobs in comparison to June of 2019. That puts us in line with the US change though our recovery has been slightly slower.

However it's also important to point out that this job loss is again completely unprecedented in modern times. If you compare the year over year employment lost during this pandemic to even the Great Recession it simply dwarfs any previous recession in terms of the scale and the speed in which it changed.

But how bad is it? Well it really depends on who you ask. First it varies

greatly by industry by region by occupation and really it all comes down to the personal level. Even people who were laid off initially might say it wasn't so bad thanks to the $600 benefits top off. Of course that program has now ended and those who are still laid off or who've not been called back to work might be facing significant financial hardship in coming months.

Others especially small businesses have been greatly impacted by the interruption and many are going to struggle to get back to normal. Clearly businesses and accommodation in food services and some sectors of retail have been hit especially hard. While other sectors like packaged delivery services or cleaning equipment manufacturers have probably never been busier. It really varies based on who you ask. We're struggling to help people make sense of all the significant economic changes and what it means for them.

So this stuff is confusing right? It can be a challenge to explain the differences in the data sets even to heavy users. For starters the estimated number of unemployed workers and the unemployment rate are distinct from the number of people applying for or currently receiving benefits through unemployment insurance program.

As the pandemic spread and our leaders put stay at home orders in place our economic situation changed rapidly. Much of our monthly data from March had been collected before the stay at home orders were enacted which put us at a disadvantage for being able to provide useful information on the unemployment rate in the short term.

March's unemployment rate doesn't come out until three weeks into April and didn't include much of the shutdown effects. April's rate didn't come out until the third week of May meaning that the first time we were able to provide data

on the change was nearly two months removed from the start of the pandemic response.

Our stakeholders needed help to put our current economic situation into perspective but the tools that we normally rely on like unemployment rates and current employment statistics, the quarterly census unemployment wages, our job vacancy survey for example don't offer the types of real-time insights that were needed.

So one tool that was typically overlook is unemployment insurance statistics and it suddenly became a very useful and popular dataset. Since we were able to provide updates every week and even every day on the number of new UI applications. Our existing tool gets updated every month like LOAS and CES usually three weeks into the following month.

July's data is going to be released later this week. It is presented as a table with a yearly change percentage included and as breakdowns for industries, occupations, age, gender and race. We have used this data successfully in the past especially during the Great Recession but more recently it was not making the cut in our presentations or reports.

And while people can download data from the tool it was not very gripping or easy to use. It made sense and looked great to us but it was confusing to outsiders. So it was mostly left for the analysts, and over the past decade during the recovery and the expansion we really didn't use it much either. We had a very tight labor market and our unemployment numbers were very low.

So in the meantime we needed to provide updates because we were getting dozens of media requests each day and we needed to provide data to our partners and stakeholders including state leaders, businesses workforce

development partners, economic development professionals and more. We worked with our UI team to get access to the data and quickly built the Tableau visualization that provides account of cumulative UI applications it gets updated every day and also provides weekly updates with demographic details.

It includes a map that shows cumulative applications by county as a share of their 2019 labor force. Especially at the outset this was incredibly valuable in showing which counties have been hit hardest by the pandemic related layoffs and shutdowns. Different parts of the state were impacted in different ways and this tool helps us provide insight into that dynamic.

The tool includes four main tabs. The first tab covers demographic details for the state all six planning regions and major cities like Minneapolis, St. Paul and Duluth. Users can find data separated by week, by age group, education level, gender, veteran status and race and ethnicity. It's important to note that this data is self-reported by the people filing the applications making it very useful in understanding who is being affected and who's going to need help in recovery in the reemployment.

The Twin Cities is home to more than 60% of the state's jobs and has accounted for the majority of the UI applications filed so far as well. But every region has different characteristics that we can point out to our partners. The Occupation's tab provides a cumulative count of applications filed by occupational group.

Not surprisingly, the largest number of applications so far has been filed by food and beverage serving workers, retail sales workers and cooks and food prep workers which is pretty unique to this situation as well as construction workers and production occupations which typically make up a large

concentration of claims.

The tool allows us to see which occupations were hit hardest initially and which are seeing upticks in layoff activity as the economic fallout from the pandemic continues on. While claims for food prep workers have dropped in recent weeks, claims for health diagnosing and treating practitioners have been holding steady and even increasing in some regions in the state over the past month. We are able to quickly identify and point these details out so our partners know how to respond.

Finally we have included a county details tab to provide additional information for our stakeholders at the local level. This includes the same demographic details and also provides occupational detail so there is a minimum of ten UI applications in each cell in order for disclosure. This county level data will no doubt be helpful to our workforce development partners moving forward.

In addition our Regional Analysis Team created a variety of visualizations to help show the impacts across the state. This includes a tool that gets updated once per week to provide UI applications as a percent of total employment and total labor force and also identifies where new layoff activity is picking up by looking at the increase in UI applications by week. While the Twin Cities has most of the UI activity counties in northeast and northwest Minnesota that have a strong reliance on leisure and hospitality were hit hardest initially.

Several counties have had more than 1/3 or even over a half of their labor force filing UI applications so far. In contrast the southwest part of our state has been much less affected by layoffs due to a stronger concentration of employment in agriculture and manufacturing and a smaller reliance on

leisure and hospitality. That being said counties that had food manufacturers that were shut down saw brief spikes in unemployment activity that have since reopened.

At a more local level we wanted to prepare our workforce development partners for the coming wave of unemployed and dislocated workers. Using the UI data we identified the industries that were hardest hit and created industry profiles at the local levels to give our boards the information they need to understand the size and the scope of these layoffs and a profile of who they will likely be working with to find new jobs in the recovery.

While the first part of the reports focus on QCEW and non-employer statistics data to show the number of firms and the number of workers in the industry and how many might be affected the second part of the report was designed to give a deeper look at who these workers are.

The Census Bureau's Quarterly Workforce Indicators data set was extremely valuable in providing detail on workforce demographics including the age, gender, race and ethnicity and educational attainment of the workforce in each of these affected industries. Each of these reports were then customized for the local areas and shared with the directors and the staff and job counselors to get them ready for the wave of dislocated workers that might be coming in.

There are multiple ways to get at this data. The easiest is the QWI Explorer tool on the LEHD website. We have a direct link from our DEED data tools website and lot of other state LMI offices have the same. You can use the information from the QWI explorer to create different reports and analysis. We use it all the time. The tool is relatively easy to use allowing for lots of filtering to get to the specific data needed.

For example on the QWI Explorer tool you can select a more specific geography including the state, counties, metro areas or workforce service areas. Areas within these geographies can easily be combined within the tool to create regions. This is important in Minnesota because we separate geographies many different ways including economic development regions, planning regions, initiative foundation regions and more. So in my example I combined two WSAs to get a region we call Central Minnesota.

Second you can also drill down into the two-digit, three-digit and four-digit NAICS codes. This becomes more important as more precision is required. For example overall manufacturing in Minnesota is doing okay. While some sectors such as machine shops and wood product manufacturing have lost jobs other subsectors such as medical device manufacturing and measuring and control instruments manufacturing have been growing and adding jobs.

We can look at demographic details in those specific sectors to see who's likely impacted. Likewise in retail trade jobs are down at motor vehicle dealerships but up at building supply stores and general merchandise stores. Or in transportation and warehousing jobs are holding steady for truck transportation but are way up for delivery services and couriers and messengers.

We can look at the specific workforce demographics for each of these subsectors to provide more insight to job counselors and other workforce development partners. Through the QWI Explorer tool you can also drill down into workforce demographics, so sex, age, education, race or ethnicity and you can also select different indicators such as turnover rate or earnings. Moving forward these data will be very insightful. You can look at hires and separations. Though this information is not real-time and it has a time lag before it before it is published it still provides lots of useful insight that can be

used to put the puzzle together.

Providing workforce demographics at a more detailed level can be incredibly helpful for our workforce development partners. Providing gender data or age data or educational data can provide insights into how to help displaced workers get back into the labor force as quickly and as smartly as possible.

Even more importantly DEED is committed to radically increasing DEED's economic impact for individuals and businesses that face systemic barriers to growth. We want to galvanize an inclusive economic recovery that advances Minnesota's labor market businesses and communities for the future Minnesota economy. That means being aware of the disparities that exist in the state calling them out and trying to figure out how to make them better.

To that end we had also built a set of racial disparities reports for the regions using data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey as well as QWI, the first page is focused on population composition and change things like educational attainment by race and origin, labor force status including employment and unemployment by race and origin and income and poverty data.

All of these can be used to show the disparities in the state in areas that need to be focused on. But another part of the reports is taken directly from QWI looking at job changes over time as well as the concentration of workers of other races and origins by industry.

If we're going to be able to respond effectively, we need to know what the workforce in these affected industries looks like. The good news is the data shows clearly that workers of other races have been gaining employment in Minnesota in large numbers over the past two decades though workers of

other races still make up a relatively small share of total workers in the state.

Certain industries most notably healthcare and social assistance, accommodation and food services, public administration, retail trade, manufacturing and administrative support and waste management services have all seen huge gains in hiring of workers of other races over time. Unfortunately, these are also the industries that have been hit hard during this recession and in many cases layoff activity has hit workers of other races harder than whites.

Some of this may be related to the idea of last in first out. If they've been hired most recently, they might be the first ones to be laid off. But this has also reopened and even widened the disparities that were already apparent in our state. Also as noted earlier for those who have not been called back the teams like continuing claims are higher for other races than for whites in Minnesota. This will likely lead to financial hardships that will be difficult to overcome if jobs don't come back evenly.

This is a topic of constant conversation for our leaders and this type of data is incredibly important. Another way to access the QWI data is through the LED Extraction tool which provides all of the data and an easily usable download which can then be manipulated in Excel or put into Tableau which I'll show an example of. The LED Extraction tool allows you to select geographies. Again you can select state, counties, metro areas or workforce investment areas within the state.

From there you can select two-digit, three digit or four-digit NAICS levels or all at the same time. From there you can select worker characteristics including sex, age, education or race and ethnicity. There are many options for data to download so in my example here, I just grabbed employment counts

and earnings but you might be interested in the other options including hires, turnover rates, separations or more.

Finally you can select all of the quarters that are relevant to your analysis going back as far as 1995 at least for Minnesota. I do believe it's different for other states. From there you can - you should always click on the checkbox for include labels and then you can submit the request and download the file once it is created. I did just the 16 workforce service areas in Minnesota at the two digit NAICS code level and for workers by race and ethnicity for a time period between 1999 and 2019.

And it created a 9-megabyte file. While that's pretty manageable, some of them can get out of control in a hurry. In Minnesota there are 87 counties and if I was to do all 87 counties and all three-digit industries and race and ethnicity it can make for a pretty big file in a pretty big hurry.

Now from there we built a Tableau of visualization to help create the charts that you saw in the earlier racial disparities' profiles. This includes a tab showing employment trends, earnings trends by race which again is a really big deal in Minnesota and can really be insightful when looking at the industry level. This detail is very relevant for our local partners and our local leaders. Likewise we also used it to show account of jobs by race in various industries as we want to focus where we can have the most impact.

Finally it shows the share of workers by race by industry and we use this in the profiles to show which industries have more workers of other races. While they haven't all been equally affected by the pandemic all of these industries certainly have been affected in some way and will likely start to see secondary impacts moving forward.

The ultimate goal for us is to help our workforce development partners react to and prepare for the work they will be doing in the next five months and beyond. In addition to the reports we've created and the virtual presentations we've done with our boards we have also used all of this labor market data to create information on our CareerForceMN.com website where we communicate directly with job seekers. This is included creating a list of the top 30 occupations in demand which we update each month as new data comes in.

For workers who have changed from a temporary layoff to a permanent layoff this data may come in very handy. We're providing data that shows which occupations might have a surplus of workers due to layoffs versus occupations that have a shortage due to current hiring demand. We can also provide data to show how those occupations might be linked. For example the customer service and listening skills that someone who's gained as a waiter or waitress could potentially be repurposed for a job as a certified nursing assistant.

On our site we have focused on healthcare, transportation repair, production and software developer occupations just as an example. Internally we've also been using the same list to identify occupations with a higher concentration of workers of other races in trying to identify jobs that have been laid off from versus jobs that are in demand now.

These Regional Analysis and Outreach Unit is available to help provide data to local partners to help them respond and react to changes in the local economy. This can include the unemployment data, the UI claims activity and even our more traditional data sets that provide the size and scope of the industries in the local area. Our team is here to help serve the people of Minnesota.

So even if the focus is currently on finding and using more real-time data, we've found that our existing data sets, especially Quarterly Workforce Indicators and other data from the Census Bureau are still extremely valuable. They provide detail and insight that can't be gained in other ways. The key is putting the puzzle pieces together in a way that makes it understandable and actionable for our stakeholders. Thank you very much for the opportunity to talk with you today.

I hope that it was helpful and that you learn more about how we can use new and existing datasets to provide perspective during the COVID 19 pandemic. I encourage you to use these resources whenever you can. With that, I will hand it back to Earlene and try and answer any questions that you might have.

Earlene Dowell: Thank you, Cameron. Operator, we are ready for questions.

Coordinator: We will now begin our question and answer session. If you'd like to ask a question please press star one from your phone. Unmute your line and record your name clearly when prompted. This is necessary to be placed in the queue. If you would like to withdraw your question you may press star two. One moment as we wait for our first question.

Earlene Dowell: Thank you, Shannon. And while we wait, please keep your questions pertaining to the presentation. All other questions regarding the 2020 Census should be directed to 2020census.gov. And also please keep your question to one question with one follow-up question.

And while we wait also, I have a couple of questions for you too. That came in this chat, Cameron. So this is from - this is from Lacey Bella Garza. She asked how do these numbers factor in those who are no longer seeking employment, but yet still not employed?

Cameron Macht: So I believe you're referring to the unemployment rate data that gets released monthly. People respond to the current population survey and they are asked if they are either actively participating in the labor force.

So they either have a job or are actively seeking a job or if they are not in the labor force. And what we've noticed is that we're starting to see a trend toward - although it's very slight at the moment, people who are starting to drop out of the labor force.

So if they're responding to the survey by saying they aren't currently looking for work, either because they're staying home to care for children or sick relatives, or if they're discouraged by what the job market looks like right now, or a lot of times we actually see people go back to college.

During recessionary periods, if they've been laid off from one job and they think they'd like to train into a different job. We typically see college enrollments go up, so that could be behind it, as well.

Earlene Dowell: Okay, great. Here's another question from Christine. How are you taking this real-time information into account to direct additional supplemental services, support, food, etc. to schools where this economic insecurity, homelessness, food insecurity, etc. will have real-time effects?

Cameron Macht: That's a great question and we probably aren't as closely linked to schools as we would like to be. And they certainly have been relying heavily on data in terms of figuring out how to open up this fall. A lot of times the information gets passed along through our workforce development partners, along with the schools.

I know in the state of Minnesota, the governor has a cabinet. There's a commissioner of education that's also meeting in the same meetings with our commissioner of Employment and Economic Development.

So the information is being passed on that way. But a lot of times the workforce development boards are our primary conduit because they have to have education partners on that board. And so we will be able to provide that type of information through the boards to them.

We have a Labor Market Information Office. We don't always have information on food shortages or other socio-economic hardships that people might be coming across like evictions or things along those lines. So, you know, our data is just one piece of that overall puzzle that they would be looking at. But we certainly would provide whatever they're asking for or looking for.

Earlene Dowell: Okay, here's another. This is from Steven. The first one is just a compliment. This is great. We policy work start jockeys love this detail. And then he says, for Oklahoma use a cumulative UI number needs more attention.

And we are looking for ways to show that the extra $600 brought people to hire them the usual income, but only because they were in the lowest wage jobs to start with, for example, food services. So I think that was more of a comment.

And then Melinda, in developing the dashboard. Were there any kind of user testing or how did the designers decide which visualization types to use the best to help your users?

Cameron Macht: That's a great question. We do - essentially, we get questions from

stakeholders and then try and build tools that will answer those questions for them. But, you know, we are not graphic designers by trade.

So there probably are ways that it could be more aesthetically pleasing. We do always share the tools once they're created with users. And if we get feedback on things that we can improve, we always try and incorporate those as quickly as possible.

But there is always a learning curve on creating Tableau visualizations that work for people. It might make intuitive sense to us; it might not make intuitive sense to our outside users.

Earlene Dowell: Great and then we have one more question before we go to the phones. Hi, Cameron under demographics did you look at UI also by marital status, married single head of household, and younger kids or school-age kids. Example impact on families with kids versus UI recipients without kids.

Cameron Macht: Unfortunately, our UI applicant data does not include marital status or whether or not they have children in the home. So that's a perfectly good example of how we would try and fill in that data using what we know from the Census Bureau.

So we've done a couple of different reports. Using data from the American Community Survey, looking at what percentage of households in the state have dual income or both parents are in the labor force or if it's a single-parent home.

If that parent is in the labor force, just to give an idea of what - how big of an impact it has on childcare and people attending school in the fall. So that's a great example of how we have to use existing data to supplement the real-time

data that's coming in.

Earlene Dowell: Shannon, are there any calls on the phone?

Coordinator: We have one question in the queue from Mr. Fairey. Your line is now open.

(Fairey): Thank you. That was a great presentation. I do have a question. When using Tableau and Tableau has the ability to do real-time data are you using any real-time data when you creating these.

Cameron Macht: Tableau is just one software option. There are others out there, like Microsoft Power BI or Google Data Studio, or I'm sure there are other ones that are - I'm sure there are other ones beyond that as well. But we use Tableau both for existing data sets and for real-time data, so we've used it to create the cumulative UI applications that get updated on a daily basis.

And we've also used Tableau to visualize like the quarterly data that comes from the quarterly census of employment and wages, or the monthly continuing claims data that comes out. So we use it for both.

(Fairey): Thank you.

Cameron Macht: Yep.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from Ohio. Your line is now open.

(Ohio): Yes, I want to ask will you include one of your tools to display the current number of deaths in Wake County, North Carolina due to COVID-19.

Cameron Macht: That might be available through the state of North Carolina's Department of

Health. But I'm only located in Minnesota so I wouldn't be able to create that for you.

(Ohio): Okay, thanks.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Ashley), your line is now open.

(Ashley): Hi, Cameron Macht. Can you hear me?

Cameron Macht: Yep.

(Ashley): Awesome. Thank you for this. I work in LMI but I'm a population analyst on behalf of the Census Bureau. So this was especially useful for me because we look at, you know, we're workforce trends intersect demographics. I was wondering if you could provide the link to your dashboard, because I wanted to look at it in further detail.

Cameron Macht: Yep. The links to the different tools that I talked about are all - will be clickable links within the presentation. And I believe that will be posted. I will hand that to Earlene Dowell but I believe that will be posted on the Census Academy website. Otherwise, my contact information is shown on this screen. So you can just send me an email and I can email it back to you right away.

(Ashley): Okay, I wasn't sure if you could just tell I was on the website right here. The deed/data and I wasn’t sure (Unintelligible).

Cameron Macht: Some of the dashboards we've created they aren't officially data tools, so they aren't listed on the data tools page. But I can give you a direct link to them.

(Ashley): Thank you.

Coordinator: As a reminder, if you'd like to ask a question, please press star one from your phone and your line and record your name clearly when prompted, as it is necessary to get into the queue for questioning. If you'd like to withdraw your question, please press star two. One moment as we wait for additional questions.

Earlene Dowell: Cameron Macht, I have a couple of questions. So this is from James. I'm sorry if I'm not pronouncing your name correctly. Has anyone outside your group adapted your TW box workbook to fit other state datasets? Any lessons learned?

Cameron Macht: I'm not sure if I understand that. You can ask that again, I'm sorry.

Earlene Dowell: Sure. Has anyone outside of your group adapted your - I don't know if it's TWDX workbook to fit or other state datasets? Any lessons learned?

Cameron Macht: That's a great question. I don't know the answer to that. I know internally our group of analysts the people who are using Tableau will just download the workbook and can modify it for their own needs.

But I haven't heard of other agencies, at least at the current point or other states, just downloading our workbooks and then changing them for their own needs. They certainly are welcome to do that. We wouldn't and we'd be happy to be a resource if anybody had additional questions about how to create something similar for themselves. But I'm not aware of it.

Earlene Dowell: Have you found I'm sorry, this is from Edward. Have you found the changes in delivery worker employment useful in understanding rapidly creasing e-commerce activity during the pandemic?

Cameron Macht: Yeah, so we have been gathering data from a lot of different sources. One of the areas we've been using data from is the Minnesota Department of Revenue. Which provides gross sales and use tax statistics for different industries.

And we've actually seen an uptick in retail sales during the early portion of this COVID 19 pandemic. And the theory behind that is there's been a significant increase in online shopping. Unfortunately, we don't have the employment data to back that up yet.

That should be coming with our second quarter of 2020 QCEW release, which should be probably in the next few months here. But yeah, you know, we're trying to find outside data sources to help provide insight into some of those trends like e-commerce.

And it seems like that's going to be a part of Minnesota's economy moving forward as well. And so helping workers understand where the opportunities are shifting toward, to help them get placed back into the economy as quickly as possible as part of our goal.

Earlene Dowell: Great. Here's another question. How long did it take you and your staff to be able to efficiently use the Census software?

Cameron Macht: The Quarterly Workforce Indicator or the QWI Explorer tool, that's something that we learn right away as we have new staff come on, we will train them on how to use that tool. And it typically doesn't take very long it's a pretty easy tool to use.

The LED Extraction tool also seems to work pretty efficiently for us,

especially when we're trying to build these Tableau visualizations of the data. Tableau actually takes a much longer time to learn than the Census tools. We've had a good experience working with the tools, I think that they're laid out pretty intuitively.

Earlene Dowell: And here's a question from Grace. Thank you. I wish you could show an example of what you just talked about mixing UI data with Census data on families with kids to better understand the impact of child care access, and school closure on employment.

Cameron Macht: Yeah, for sure, I wish I could share that with you as well. I don't have it included in this presentation so I apologize for that. But it is a great example of how we're taking what we know from the real-time and then supplementing it with the data that we do have available through the American Community Survey.

One of the challenges is a lot of times those are one-off requests that will come in. The commissioner or stakeholders will ask that type of question. And then you know, for us it's kind of a scramble to pull the data together as quickly as possible and then respond.

So I would say it's not in a formal report or presentation the same way as what I covered today. But it is data that we have provided upon request.

Earlene Dowell: Another question is from Maria. I am watching regional industry profiles. I see it was created in response to COVID but QCEW data is not - still not available for 2020. You show two quarter one to quarter three of 2019. I wonder if it is to have a reference of how markets work where we were before COVID for those industries, is that the case? Thanks.

Cameron Macht: Yeah, yep. So that's a great point. So all of the timing and everything in responding to these requests there sometimes is data that gets requested one week, and we don't have it and then the following week, we do have it.

So in the case of this regional industry profiles, we actually started creating them in the middle of March. And at that point, fourth-quarter 2019 data from QCEW hadn't even been released yet. By the time we were - so we continued creating more of these regional industry profiles into April and maybe even into May, but into April for sure.

And by that time, fourth quarter 2019 data had been released and so then we started using annual 2019 data for the industry profiles versus just the first to the third quarter.

And now actually, in Minnesota, the first quarter of 2022, QCEW data has been released. And so it may be a point where - when second-quarter 2022 QCEW data gets released in the next couple of months.

We may go back and revise all of these regional industry profiles for our local partners to say, you know, here's what happened in those industries during that timeframe between the first quarter and second quarter.

Yeah, I mean it's always a timing issue and with QCEW, you're always dealing with a timeline. There are about four, four to five months between when the data gets shared with us when we actually publish online.

But to your - so the end of the question, I think was, was the idea then to show the size of the industry within the region so that our partners would know what reasonable to expect in terms of the number of people getting laid off and coming in, that are going to need services.

And that was 100% what our goal was to try and just give people an idea of which industries are going to be impacted, and how many people is that going to really affect. So in Minnesota, retail trade is a much bigger industry than personal care services.

And a lot of people in personal services are actually self-employed. And so we had to include that information as well to just give people a better perspective on who's going to be coming in who's going to need the services.

And we've certainly followed up with our local boards, our workforce development partners to provide additional detail after they've received these reports, because they might ask things like, well, what's the educational attainment for people who are likely to be laid off in this area. And doesn't make sense to get them into training in different areas if their jobs don't eventually come back. Great question.

Earlene Dowell: I have one more question before we can go - we can go back to the phones to see if there are any more questions. This is from Roman and he asks, do you have any suggestions on how local community economic development groups might use the LMI step?

Cameron Macht: Yeah, so that would be awesome if more local economic developers were using labor market information to help guide their decision making. Our state is fortunate enough to have five regional analysts stationed across the state.

And they are out in local communities, not all headquartered in the state capitol. And I think that allows us to create really good networks and partnerships with them. So they know that if they have a question regarding, you know, is their labor force still growing? You know, how is their

unemployment rate changing? And how many unemployed workers are there?

More local information on which industries are the largest employers within their communities and how they've been impacted during this time period. Commuting patterns to see, you know, where people live versus where they work that also is from the Census Bureau and is a great tool to provide to local economic developers.

I think the key is for those local economic developers to reach out to their LMI offices and find out what's available to them. Each state is probably going to be a little bit different but, you know, there's no - the best thing they can do is just create a relationship with a labor market analyst that can provide that type of detail for them.

Earlene Dowell: I have no further questions in the queue. I did see a question regarding something about our COVID hubs. So I put that into the chat. It's COVID19.census.gov if anybody wants to look that way. And then there is one more question that just came through Anthony asks, how are demand occupations identified?

Cameron Macht: That's a great question too. So we have been working. We have an analyst on staff that is working with the National Labor Exchange, which is providing us with daily and weekly, and monthly job posting counts within the state of Minnesota.

And so it's drawing directly from job banks like in our state, it's called Minnesotaworks.net. That's the state online job posting database. But also drawing from employer websites. So it gives us a pretty complete count of the number of jobs that are currently posted.

We analyze that and then compare it with data that we have from like our job vacancy survey. And that's how we create the list of demand occupations. And we do update it every month, in order to make sure that we're sticking as real-time as possible.

Earlene Dowell: Great, Shannon, are there any calls on the phone?

Coordinator: Yes, we have a few questions in the queue. Our next question comes from Michelle.

(Michelle): Hi, can you hear me?

Cameron Macht: Yep.

Earlene Dowell: Yes, we can hear you.

(Michelle): So I actually - you already did answer, ask, and answer my question. It was about how long your staff; it took you to be able to use the Census software. And I got your answer about the Tableau. Was your staff already? - You said it was pretty quick. I mean, a couple of days, and you did the training, you said you gave them training when they start. Where did you get that training?

Cameron Macht: So, the training on like the QWI Explorer and the LED Extraction tool. This is something that I would walk each of the analysts through after they've started. And it’s part of all of the data tools that we would cover.

So we would maybe spend an hour or a couple of hours walking through the QWI Explorer tool. And then you know, they're obviously expected to be using that tool and to be learning from that tool on the job.

That being said, we've also been lucky enough to have Earlene Dowell join us for - we do a monthly conference call with all the analysts and she's come in and walked us through some of the Census tools as well.

And I believe that there is a Census staff who were willing to do that type of training. And if not, I believe there's also a lot of tutorials and training sessions available on the Census Bureau site. And referring to Tableau Yep, Tableau takes a lot longer to learn how to use.

Earlene Dowell: Michelle, you can send me your email and I'll send you my email.

(Michelle): Okay, send. Who was that?

Earlene Dowell: You can put it in the chat and this is Earlene Dowell and we can set up some kind of training.

(Michelle): Okay. Thank you.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from Sherry your lines are now open.

(Sherry): Oh, hello.

Coordinator: Yes, ma'am. Your line is open.

(Sherry): Okay. Ah, I just want to ask you to - do you have any like links about the pandemic as a data real timeline data available? You have a link? or just in general one link COVID19. Some already type all this on the chat.

Earlene Dowell: Yes, Sherry. This is Earlene Dowell I sent that link. It's COVID-19.census.gov.

(Sherry): Okay. Another question about the Tableau. Are there like free Tableau like free available online? The Tableau software.

Earlene Dowell: I'm sorry, free software you said?

(Sherry): Yeah, I mean the Tableau, Tableau software and they're like the free of the Tableau.

Cameron Macht: Ah, yeah. So Tableau has a public data site that you can use. Otherwise the software, you can purchase a license to use that software. I know R is available for Free. And that's a really useful software package as well for doing data analysis. There are probably other software packages out there. I've just happened to be most familiar with Tableau.

(Sherry): Thank you.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from Ashley. Your line is now open.

(Ashley): Hi, Cameron. I'm just curious if you guys are a member of the website Consortium. So in other words, is your LMI website hosted by Montana? Or is it hosted by yourself? By yourself?

Cameron Macht: It is - Yep, we host our own sites.

(Ashley): Thank you.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Woman 1). Your line is now open.

Woman 1: Yes, my question is, can you hear me Cameron?

Cameron Macht: Yep.

Woman 1: Okay, is there a way to monitor the check on - to check the data analysis how quickly a person who's unemployed is actually back to work at this pandemic time.

Cameron Macht: We don't have that level of analysis yet. One of the clearest ways to see it, though, is in the number of continuing claims.

So those are people who are actually requesting and receiving weekly benefits payments from the UI program. And we've seen a substantial drop in a number of weekly benefits requests over the past month.

Woman 1: Okay.

Cameron Macht: So we're assuming that those people are getting - going back to work.

Woman 1: Thank you.

Cameron Macht: Yep.

Coordinator: As a reminder, if you'd like to ask a question, please press star 1. If you'd like to withdraw your question, please press star 2. One moment as we wait for additional questions.

Earlene Dowell: Cameron, I have a couple so Michael. Your presentation was around county data and many initiatives for inner-city development are place-based and concepts like TOC require an analysis at the block group level. Why is state not doing study at that - this scale? This is where we are working with our

workforce development model in Los Angeles."

Cameron Match: Sure and we've done some analysis and sharing of data from UI applications and from continuing claims at the ZIP code level in Minnesota is probably not comparable to Los Angeles in terms of population density. So a lot of times in our analysis county-level data will meet the needs of the people that we're working with. But I certainly understand how in a metro area the more detailed level of information is very necessary because there can be significant differences even within the same city.

I don't know well enough what California has available. But I would suggest reaching out to your labor market information office and seeing what level of detail they have for unemployment insurance applications or claims statistics. Hopefully that helps.

Earlene Dowell: And then another question from Michelle. "What was the other software that you mentioned in relation to Tableau?"

Cameron Macht: So Microsoft has a product called Power BI. Google actually has a new free tool called Data Studio although I haven't had any experience working with that. I'm not entirely sure how it works or if it works. And then there's also a software program called R which is just the letter R which is statistical analysis software that you can download for free. It's open source and you can use that to create some visualizations as well.

Earlene Dowell: Okay nothing in the chat. Any more on the phone Shannon?

Coordinator: Currently there are no questions in the queue.

Earlene Dowell: Excellent. So I would like to take this time to thank Cameron and thank all of

you for attending this Webinar. Thank you, Cameron, for such an interesting presentation. Upon closing out of your Webinar please take a moment to complete the survey so we can better serve you in the future.

And with that I wish everyone a good day. And please join us next month on September 16 at 1:30 pm Eastern Standard Time when Patrick Flaherty presents, Manufacturing Worker Age Profile and Implications for Earnings. Thank you all so much.

Coordinator: This concludes today's conference. All line may disconnect at this time.

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